



**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

Iran – Earthquake

Fact Sheet #2, Fiscal Year (FY) 2004

December 29, 2003

BACKGROUND

- On December 26, 2003 at 05:27 am local time, an earthquake struck Kerman Province in southeastern Iran. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the earthquake measured 6.6 on the Richter scale and had a depth of 10 km. The epicenter was near the city of Bam, 180 km southeast of the provincial capital of Kerman and 975 km southeast of Tehran.
- The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) reports that an estimated 100,000 to 120,000 people live in Bam and the surrounding villages, all of whom have been affected by the earthquake. International media reports estimate that the earthquake has resulted in the deaths of 20,000 to 30,000 people. Government of Iran (GOI) officials estimate that 25,000 to 40,000 people have been injured. GOI officials report that 80 percent of houses have been destroyed in the immediate area of Bam, and an estimated 70,000 residents are homeless.

CURRENT SITUATION

Coordination

- According to UN OCHA, there is an urgent need for field coordination due to the large number of volunteers. Beginning December 30, UN OCHA will hold sectoral meetings to facilitate assistance.
- Kerman Provincial authorities have established an office in Kerman to coordinate emergency operations and another office in Bam for liaising with humanitarian workers.
- UN OCHA has dispatched a United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team to the area to assist in the coordination of relief efforts.
- The U.N. Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) in Tehran sent two teams to the area on December 26 to collect, verify, and compile information on the impact of the earthquake. The UNDMT consists of the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the U.N. World Food Program (WFP), the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO), and the U.N. Development Program (UNDP).

Security

- On December 28, Iranian media sources reported that incidents of looting hindered the arrival of humanitarian supplies and workers to Bam. Beginning December 29, Iranian security forces allowed only trucks and cars carrying humanitarian assistance and relief workers to enter Bam. According to Iranian news sources, the security situation has significantly improved.

Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)

- According to Iranian news sources, an estimated 1,000 people were rescued from the ruins on December 27 and 28.
- On December 28, the GOI and UN OCHA recommended ending the USAR phase. As of December 29, USAR teams are beginning to withdraw.
- According to international media reports, machinery has arrived in Bam on December 29 to begin the process of burial and clean-up.

Shelter

- According to UN OCHA, many displaced persons are relocating with family members, but other residents are sleeping outdoors in below freezing temperatures.
- The GOI has announced plans to build camps to accommodate the homeless in Bam.

Health

- According to UN OCHA, the earthquake destroyed both hospitals in Bam. The Iranian Red Crescent has established a field hospital at Bam airport to house the critically injured while they await air transfer. The Iranian Red Crescent has treated an estimated 30,000 casualties. According to international media reports, an estimated 11,500 of the injured have been airlifted to other cities for medical treatment.

- With the end of USAR activities, health concerns emerge as the priority. Due to poor shelter conditions, a U.N. official has warned of a massive outbreak of illnesses such as diarrhea, dysentery, and influenza.

Power, water, and logistics

- On December 27, UN OCHA reported that the earthquake disrupted water, electricity, gas, and telephone services in the area.
- According to a December 28 UN OCHA report, electrical power has been restored to certain areas of Bam, and major water pipelines are now in service. After initial difficulties, the mobile phone system is improving.
- On December 28, UN OCHA reported that the Bam airport is having difficulties accommodating the large number of incoming aircraft.

Displaced Afghan refugees

- According to UN OCHA, 4,500 of the affected residents were Afghan refugees residing in Bam, and many of these survivors are now reportedly preparing to repatriate to Afghanistan.

U.S. GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

- On December 27, USAID deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) composed of 84 members. The USAID members include a Team Leader, Deputy Team Leader, Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Operations Coordinator, Planning Coordinator, Communications Officer, Information Officer, and Security Officer. Other components of the DART include the Fairfax County USAR Task Force and the International Medical/Surgical Response Team (IMSuRT) and Management Support Team (MST) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- The Fairfax County USAR Task Force consists of eleven personnel who will participate in humanitarian-related operations.
- The FEMA IMSuRT team consists of a six-member management support team and 60 medical professionals.
- USAID/OFDA has prepared two airlifts of relief commodities, consisting of 300 rolls of plastic sheeting and approximately 12,500 blankets. The commodities will be delivered to Bam once air clearance is obtained.
- According to the U.S. Department of Defense, as of December 28, seven C-130s have airlifted approximately 68 metric tons (MT) of medical supplies, 2,000 blankets, 1,000 cases of bottled water, and a 10K forklift to assist in the offloading of relief commodities in Bam.

OTHER DONOR AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION ASSISTANCE

- According to international media reports and UN OCHA, the following donors have pledged assistance, including monetary and non-food items, as of December 29: Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Denmark, European Union, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, India, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Kenya, Luxemburg, Norway, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, a and the United Kingdom.
- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has dispatched an assessment and coordination team to the disaster site and released a preliminary appeal for \$12.3 million in cash, kind or services to assist 200,000 beneficiaries for six months.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for their earthquake response efforts in Iran can be found in the “How Can I Help” section of www.usaid.gov/iran, or by calling (703) 276-1914. USAID encourages cash donations because they: allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, warehouse space, etc); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information on making donations and volunteering services can be found at:
 - USAID: www.usaid.gov → “Our Work” → “Humanitarian Assistance” → “Disaster Assistance” → “How Can I Help”
 - The Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org or (703) 276-1914
 - InterAction: www.interaction.org → “Guide to Appropriate Giving”
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.int.